

59th Annual *ABILITY COUNTS*  
**JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIP**

Guide for teachers  
of 10th, 11th and  
12th grade students



**“Workers with Disabilities:**  
America’s People, America’s Talent ...  
America’s Strength!”



**DEADLINE: JANUARY 30, 2009**

Sponsored by the  
Alabama Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities,  
a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

# Ability Counts Journalism Scholarship GUIDELINES

The purpose of this competition is to reward excellence in journalistic writing and to help young Alabamians become aware of the talents that people with disabilities bring to the job market. This year's theme is "Workers with Disabilities: America's People, America's Talent ... America's Strength!"

## Preparation \_\_\_\_\_

Articles must:

- be written in English,
- cover some phase of the theme,
- be typewritten, double-spaced on 8 1/2-X-11 inch paper,
- not exceed three pages in length,
- be accompanied by a separate, attached cover sheet.

A sample cover sheet is attached. It may be photocopied as necessary. Articles that do not adhere to the above criteria will not be accepted.

## Deadline \_\_\_\_\_

The deadline is January 30, 2009.

### Mail Entries

Ability Counts Journalism Scholarship Program  
Alabama Governor's Committee  
Denise Holmes  
602 S. Lawrence St.  
Montgomery, AL 36104

### Fax Entries

(334) 293-7384

### Email Entries

Send entries as a text or Microsoft Word document attachment (include cover sheet information) to [denise.holmes@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:denise.holmes@rehab.alabama.gov).

## Prizes \_\_\_\_\_

**1st Place – \$300**

**2nd Place – \$250**

**3rd Place – \$200**

**4th Place – \$150**

**5th Place – \$100**

Winners will each also receive a Certificate of Merit from the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Each teacher of a winning student will receive a Certificate of Meritorious Service. State winners and their teachers will be invited to attend an **Awards Luncheon** in Montgomery in the spring.

## Judging \_\_\_\_\_

This is a community reporting project; therefore, the judges will give considerable weight to each entrant's initiative in obtaining information through personal interviews and observations. Each article also will be judged on content, organization, clarity of expression, neatness, familiarity with disability issues, and use of sensitive language in describing people with disabilities.

# LANGUAGE TIPS\*



## PUT THE PERSON FIRST.

Say “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person.” Say “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled.” For specific disabilities, saying “person with Tourette Syndrome” or “person who has cerebral palsy” is usually a safe bet. Still, individuals have their own preferences. If you are not sure what words to use, ask.

Say “wheelchair user” rather than “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair bound.” The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it’s liberating, not confining.

It’s OK to use idiomatic expressions when talking to people with disabilities. For example, saying, “It was good to see you” and “See you later” to a person who is blind is completely acceptable. They use these expressions themselves all the time!

Many people who are Deaf communicate with sign language and consider themselves to be members of a cultural and linguistic minority. They refer to themselves as Deaf with a capital “D” and may be offended by the term “hearing impaired.”

Avoid outdated terms like “handicapped” or “crippled.” Be aware that many people with disabilities dislike jargony, euphemistic terms like “physically challenged” and “differently abled.”

Use “hard of hearing” to refer to people who have hearing loss but communicate in spoken language. With any disability, avoid negative, disempowering words like “victim” or “suffered.” Say “person with AIDS,” instead of “AIDS victim” or “one who suffers from AIDS.”

Note: You want to think of people who have a disability as individuals, your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors – rather than using the generic term “they” for people with disabilities.

\*Source: “Disability Etiquette,” a publication of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association

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# Cover Sheet

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE



## STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/state/zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

School's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/state/zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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